

## **WHAT ARE THE INSTRUMENTS OF MONETARY POLICY?**

Fiduciary or paper money is issued by the Central Bank on the basis of computation of estimated demand for cash. Monetary policy guides the Central Bank's supply of money in order to achieve the objectives of price stability (or low inflation rate), full employment, and growth in aggregate income. This is necessary because money is a medium of exchange and changes in its demand relative to supply, necessitate spending adjustments. To conduct monetary policy, some monetary variables which the Central Bank controls are adjusted-a monetary aggregate, an interest rate or the exchange rate-in order to affect the goals which it does not control. The instruments of monetary policy used by the Central Bank depend on the level of development of the economy, especially its financial sector. The commonly used instruments are discussed below.

Reserve Requirement: The Central Bank may require Deposit Money Banks to hold a fraction (or a combination) of their deposit liabilities (reserves) as vault cash and or deposits with it. Fractional reserve limits the amount of loans banks can make to the domestic economy and thus limit the supply of money. The assumption is that Deposit Money Banks generally maintain a stable relationship between their reserve holdings and the amount of credit they extend to the public.

Open Market Operations: The Central Bank buys or sells ((on behalf of the Fiscal Authorities (the Treasury)) securities to the banking and non-banking public (that is in the open market). One such security is Treasury Bills. When the Central Bank sells securities, it reduces the supply of reserves and when it buys (back) securities-by redeeming them-it increases the supply of reserves to the Deposit Money Banks, thus affecting the supply of money.

Lending by the Central Bank: The Central Bank sometimes provide credit to Deposit Money Banks, thus affecting the level of reserves and hence the monetary base.

Interest Rate: The Central Bank lends to financially sound Deposit Money Banks at a most favourable rate of interest, called the minimum rediscount rate (MRR). The MRR sets the floor for the interest rate regime in the money market (the nominal anchor rate) and thereby affects the supply of credit, the supply of savings (which affects the supply of reserves and monetary aggregate) and the supply of investment (which affects full employment and GDP).

Direct Credit Control: The Central Bank can direct Deposit Money Banks on the maximum percentage or amount of loans (credit ceilings) to different economic sectors or activities, interest rate caps, liquid asset ratio and issue credit guarantee to preferred loans. In this way the available savings is allocated and investment directed in particular directions.

Moral Suasion: The Central Bank issues licenses or operating permit to Deposit Money Banks and also regulates the operation of the banking system. It can, from this advantage, persuade banks to follow certain paths such as credit restraint or expansion, increased savings mobilization and promotion of exports through financial support, which otherwise they may not do, on the basis of their risk/return assessment.

Prudential Guidelines: The Central Bank may in writing require the Deposit Money Banks to exercise particular care in their operations in order that specified outcomes are realized. Key elements of prudential guidelines remove some discretion from bank management and replace it with rules in decision making.

Exchange Rate: The balance of payments can be in deficit or in surplus and each of these affect the monetary base, and hence the money supply in one direction or the other. By selling or buying foreign exchange, the Central Bank ensures that the exchange rate is at levels that do not affect domestic money supply in undesired direction, through the balance of payments and the real

exchange rate. The real exchange rate when misaligned affects the current account balance because of its impact on external competitiveness. Moral suasion and prudential guidelines are direct supervision or qualitative instruments. The others are quantitative instruments because they have numerical benchmarks.